Annual Report

1983

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

Edward J. McHugh, Commissioner

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

This report is dedicated in memory of Dominick Marinello, who served for many years on the Advisory Board.

ADVISORY BOARD

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is a state agency established in 1966. The Commission provides a wide range of social and rehabilitation services to legally blind Massachusetts residents of all ages. At the close of fiscal 1983 a total of 22,502 legally blind persons were registered with the Commission. Referrals to the agency are made by ophthalmologists and optometrists, hospitals and low vision clinics, public and private institutions, and by interested individuals.

The Commission employs 250 people in the areas of service delivery, administration and clerical support. The agency operates on a combined federal-state budget which in fiscal year 1983 was $40 million.

Services provided by the Commission include:

- Children's Services
- Community Rehabilitation Services
- Employment Services
- Independent Living Program
- Industries Program
- Medical and Financial Assistance
- Multi-Handicapped Services
- Rehabilitation Teaching Services
- Social Rehabilitation Services
- Vending Facilities
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to present this Annual Report of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. The Commission continues to make progress in the delivery of services to legally blind persons in the Commonwealth.This report provides a comprehensive look at the programs and services offered during this past year.

The main objective of the Commission is to provide services of high quality to legally blind persons which enable them to maintain or achieve independence. Comprehensive services are provided in the areas of vocational rehabilitation, rehabilitation teaching and social rehabilitation.

Major accomplishments during the year involved program development in the areas of vocational assessment, evaluation and training, children's services and elderly services. Other accomplishments include: the provision of sophisticated electronic equipment, which enable blind persons to take their place in the high technology sector of the economy; implementation of a one-year and long range planning process; and further development of a client services manual.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our staff for their dedication and accomplishments. I also appreciate the continued interest and support of consumers, the legislature, provider agencies and the general public in the services and activities of the Commission.

Edward J McHugh

EDWARD J. McHUGH, *COMMISSIONER*

REHABILITATION LEADS TO INDEPENDENCE

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors evaluate the interests and abilities of clients and provide guidance in the selection of suitable employment goals. Medical and psychological evaluations and aptitude testing may be used to help determine client capabilities. Further training or education may be provided, if necessary, to obtain employment and independence.

- Social Rehabilitation services are wide-ranging. Social workers provide individual and family counseling, information and referral services, and assistance in seeking suitable housing, recreation and other community services.

- Rehabilitation Teaching services are provided in the client's home. Teachers instruct in techniques of daily living, which include cooking, cleaning and homemaker chores, communication skills, such as braille, typing and handwriting, and leisure time development.

- Orientation and Mobility specialists teach independent travel to clients. Skills taught include: orientation to home and place of employment, cane travel, crossing street, using public transportation and other independent travel techniques.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- The Commission's largest program is Medical Assistance. Client eligibility is determined for Medicaid and Medicare payments. The program works closely with Departments of Public Welfare, Mental Health, Public Health, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the Social Security Administration, and other community health agencies to assure adequate health care services to eligible blind persons.

- The Commission distributes Talking Book machines and cassette players to blind and print-handicapped persons of Massachusetts. Machines are available free on loan and are repaired without charge by staff and Telephone Pioneers of America (retired and employed telephone workers who generously volunteer their time). Books and magazines on virtually every subject are available through the Regional Library at Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown and the sub-regional library at the Worcester Public Library.

- Low vision devices assist clients in maintaining or obtaining employment. Our low vision consultant performs on-site assessments in the work place or at home, trains clients to use low vision aids, and provides necessary follow-up. Low vision evaluations determine which specialized devices are most effective for clients.

JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES

- Placement specialists work closely with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in finding jobs for clients and assist in teaching clients resume writing, interviewing techniques, and how to use other placement sources. They contact employers directly to develop employment opportunities for job-ready applicants. Placement specialists, also provide individualized consultations to employers to evaluate specific jobs, assist with job modifications where required and provide follow-up services and retraining for blind employees being promoted or changing careers.

- Job-related equipment is provided to eligible clients. Specialized devices range from closed circuit television monitors to talking calculators, tape recorders and other adaptive equipment.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The Vending Facilities program is a vocational rehabilitation service in which clients interested in self-employment can receive training in the operation of small retail vending facilities and go on to support themselves and their families. Counselors and established vendors provide management skills and on-site experience for trainees. The program secures new vending facilities and provides trained and licensed vendors with the necessary equipment and initial merchandise to start their own businesses. They then become independent businessmen and women. The 60 vending facilities statewide are located in federal, state, county and municipal properties as well as in private industry and retail outlets.

- Massachusetts Industries for the Blind employs blind workers in our large manufacturing plant in Cambridge and four local workshops in Lowell, Fall River, Worcester, and Springfield. Blind employees manufacture brooms, mops, linens and pens. Subcontract work and chair caning services are also performed by these workers.

- Blind Piano Tuners provide services, under a program coordinated by the Commission, to state and local governments, the private sector and individual customers throughout the Commonwealth.

- Homebound blind workers also receive the total proceeds from sales of consignment products through our Home Industries program. Items made by homebound individuals for sale include: denim bags and skirts, aprons, towels and oven mitts.

THE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has been successful in establishing a Center for Independent Living with the aid of a Federal grant. This Independent Living Center extends the range of rehabilitation services to legally blind, severely disabled persons unable to participate in a traditional vocational rehabilitation program.

Established in 1980, the Center for Independent Living is completing its third full year of operation. The Center's major focus is the coordination of existing federal, state and local resources enabling this population to function more independently. The Center is fortunate to have an advisory board of consumers and rehabilitation professionals who provide helpful recommendations on the direction and operation of the Center. The counselors at the Center coordinate a wide range of services which assist clients to maximize independence and freedom.

These services include:

case management and advocacy services
training in independent living skills
personal and family counseling
assistance in self-help and problem solving
peer counseling and communication skills
transportation and housing coordination
adaptive aids and special equipment

Center staff also provide a link to other Commission services.

LINKING CLIENTS WITH COMMUNITY RESOURCES

In maximizing independence it is essential to keep in touch with community and statewide resources which can benefit clients. In order to identify these resources the Center contracted with the Information Center for Individuals with Disabilities to develop an indexed, easy reference information guide to relevant resources. This up-to-date computer-based inventory of resources and independent services provides easy access to detailed information about valuable resources. Specific information from the guide is available by contacting the Information Center for Individuals with Disabilities or the Independent Living Center.

The Center is working to create new resources for its clients. One major problem is locating affordable, accessible housing. The Center keeps informed about appropriate public housing opportunities throughout the state and works closely with local housing authorities and community sponsors to develop new housing units. The Center is also developing self-help support groups in which clients and their families can share experiences and resolve issues. With more than 50 individuals and their families participating in the program, the Center looks forward to continuing to provide quality services to severely disabled blind persons of the Commonwealth.

MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS

- The Commission provides services to blind and visually handicapped children from infancy to age 14. Counselors visit the home, work directly with the child and show parents how to help their child grow independently. They provide counseling and support to children and their families and teach techniques of daily living, recreational activities, and other skills.

- As the relationship grows and needs change, the children's workers are there to coordinate educational services and continue counseling during these formative years. They work closely with rehabilitation teachers, vocational rehabilitation counselors and social workers to ensure continued service delivery beyond age 14.

- The multihandicap program serves clients who are mentally retarded blind, deaf-blind, and mentally retarded deaf-blind. Counselors provide direct services to help this population to be as independent as possible through suitable employment or as homemakers. Additional services are provided by social workers, rehabilitation teachers, mobility instructors, and the equipment engineer.

CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

- The Client Assistance Project, (CAP), of the Commission has a special role in helping to provide quality services to legally blind clients. The Project informs clients of their rights, benefits and responsibilities under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and other relevant laws and regulations. CAP advocates on issues such as civil rights, guide dog discrimination, Social Security, housing and transportation. In addition, CAP tries to prevent problems before they occur. This is accomplished by identifying issues, and helping clients, as consumers, to become their own self-advocates.

- Braille, tape or large print copies of CAP's *Guide to Self-Advocacy* are available. It describes how government works and client's rights and responsibilities as consumers of services. The guide also has a comprehensive list of resources which are helpful in self-advocacy.

- Since 1978, Consumer Advisory Councils have made a substantial contribution to the work of the Commission. Each of the six regions in the state has an Advisory Council consisting of 11 members. The 16 member Central Advisory Council has two members representing each region, along with representatives from consumer organizations, private agencies serving the blind, and other interested persons.

- The chief responsibilities of the regional and central advisory councils are to advise the Commission on its policies and advocate on behalf of blind people.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

- The Commission's library is open to staff, professionals and the general public who are interested in the field of blindness. The library offers a number of current journals and periodicals, ranging from aids and devices to psychology. The book collection runs to gamut from administration to vocational rehabilitation, and films are available on how to help a blind person, employment opportunities and the medical causes of blindness. Call the library for more information, at 727-5550 or Mass. Toll-free 1-800-392-6450.

NEWS AND

- The Commission's radio show is broadcast on the radio reading service for the blind, the Talking Information Center. Originating from our Boston Office, this bi-weekly program informs listeners about services available and, with two-way talk capability, they can join in on the conversation. The TIC broadcasts to blind and print-handicapped listeners in the Boston, South Shore, Southeastern Mass. and Worcester areas. It is estimated that there were approximately 2000 listeners during the year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

- The Commission keeps an up-to-date account of the legally blind population through the Central Register. The Unit registers and certifies newly blind people, furnishes travel passes and conducts a census of the registered population.

- The Central Register and Research Units compile an Annual Report of the Register which provides detailed information concerning the number of legally blind persons in each community in the state. The report also provides statistics on their ages, sex, medical causes and source of referrals.

- During the past fiscal year, conferences were conducted by the Commission's Staff Development Unit for vocational rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation teachers and social workers. Issues of importance included: individual and family counseling, depression and nutrution, gerontology and nursing home facilities.

INFORMATION

- The Commission also provides information on services and activities through "Focal Point", a quarterly large print and cassette newsletter, distributed to consumers and the general public by the Public Information Office.

- The Telephone Information Tape enables quick and easy access to current information. Callers hear a three-minute tape, up-dated weekly. They can also leave messages and request additional information. Call 727-5550 or Mass. Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450 evenings and weekends.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In fiscal year 1983, the Commission's total appropriation was $40,578,634.00. Nearly 80 percent was allocated to medical and financial assistance, more than 4 percent to vocational rehabilitation, more than 3 percent to workshops, and just under 2 percent to social services.

MAJOR APPROPRIATION CATEGORIES

	1980	1981	1982	1983
Financial Assistance	6,147,000.	9,498,911.	9,973,000.	10,459,000.
Medical Assistance	11,948,877.	16,833,200.	19,708,370.	21,420,839.
Social Services	1,536,318.	1,604,461.	1,722,599.	1,752,856.
Vocational Rehabilitation	663,972.	918,669.	1,085,362.	1,765,185.
Workshops & Industries	1,429,492.	1,471,862.	1,577,177.	1,302,538.
Independent Living	200,000.	221,000.	217,668.	217,668.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS REHABILITATED

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION 280
SOCIAL REHABILITATION 1,085

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Medical Assistance 6,300
Rehabilitation Teaching 1,958
Orientation and Mobility 740
Vocational Rehabilitation 1,250
Social Rehabilitation 2,282
Independent Living 80
Children 265

AGENCY PUBLICATIONS AND INFORMATION

- Brochure of Services
- Blindness and Visual Impairment
- Resource Directory
- Children's Services
- Compilation of Massachusetts Laws Pertaining to Blindness
- Guide to Self Advocacy
- Medical Assistance
- Multihandicapped Services
- Report of the Register
- Trend Analysis
- Questions Most Often Asked About Eyesight By People Over 60
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- Call the PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE at **727-5550** or MASS. TOLL-FREE **1-800-392-6450** to request publications (in braille, large print or cassette), speakers for your group or organization, and information on blindness.

CENTRAL OFFICE

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
110 Tremont Street, 6th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
Telephone: (617) 727-5550
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450

REGIONAL OFFICES

Region I (Western Massachusetts)
1200 Main Street
Springfield, Massachusetts 01103
(413) 781-1290
Toll Free: 1-800-332-2772

Region II (Central Massachusetts)
90 Madison Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01608
(617) 754-1148
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450, Ext. 0522

Region III (North of Boston)
110 Tremont Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
Sixth Floor
(617) 727-5550
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450

Region IV (Metropolitan Boston)
110 Tremont Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
Sixth Floor
(617) 727-5550
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450

Region V (Southeastern Massachusetts)
85 North Main Street
Fall River, Massachusetts 02720
(617) 676-1056
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450, Ext. 0577

Region VI (Boston, Brookline)
110 Tremont Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
Sixth Floor
(617) 727-5550
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450

PUBLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT APPROVED BY DANIEL D. CARTER, STATE PURCHASING AGENT

900-8-84-177971

Estimated Cost Per Copy $.78

Joe

Annual Report

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MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

Michael S. Dukakis, Governor

Philip W. Johnston, Secretary of the Executive Office of Human Services

Charles H. Crawford, Commissioner

ADVISORY BOARD

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is a state agency established in 1966. The Commission provides a wide range of rehabilitation, independent living and social services to legally blind Massachusetts residents of all ages. At the close of fiscal year 1984 a total of 23,533 legally blind persons were registered with the Commission. Referrals to the agency are made by ophthalmologists and optometrists, hospitals and low vision clinics, public and private institutions, and by interested individuals.

The Commission employs 250 people in the areas of service delivery, administration and clerical support. The agency operates on a combined federal state budget, which in fiscal year 1984 was $43 million.

Services Provided by the Commission Include:

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- Community Rehabilitation Services
- Employment Services
- Independent Living Program
- Industries Program
- Medical and Financial Assistance
- Multi-Handicapped Services
- Rehabilitation Teaching Services
- Social Rehabilitation Services
- Vending Facilities
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Major Funding Provided For Talking Book Services and Radio Reading Services

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to present this Annual Report of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. The Commission continues to make progress in the delivery of services to legally blind persons in the Commonwealth. This report provides a comprehensive look at the programs and services offered during this past fiscal year.

If any remembrance of 1984 is to stand out, it must be the acknowledgement of the compassion and steadfast dedication of those who work in the agency and have made their career that of providing or supporting the professional delivery of human services. These on-going efforts conducted within an environment of change, are a credit to the personal commitment of those who work at MCB, and the fruits of their labor shall benefit our clients and the society at large for many years to come. It is upon the foundation of these remarkable human beings, who have given so much to benefit our clients, that we build the future of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and in doing so, contribute to the unfolding of our Commonwealth.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our staff for their dedication and accomplishments. I also appreciate the continued interest and support of consumers, the legislature, provider agencies and the general public in the services and activities of the Commission.

Charles H. Crawford

Charles H. Crawford
Commissioner

REHABILITATION LEADS TO INDEPENDENCE

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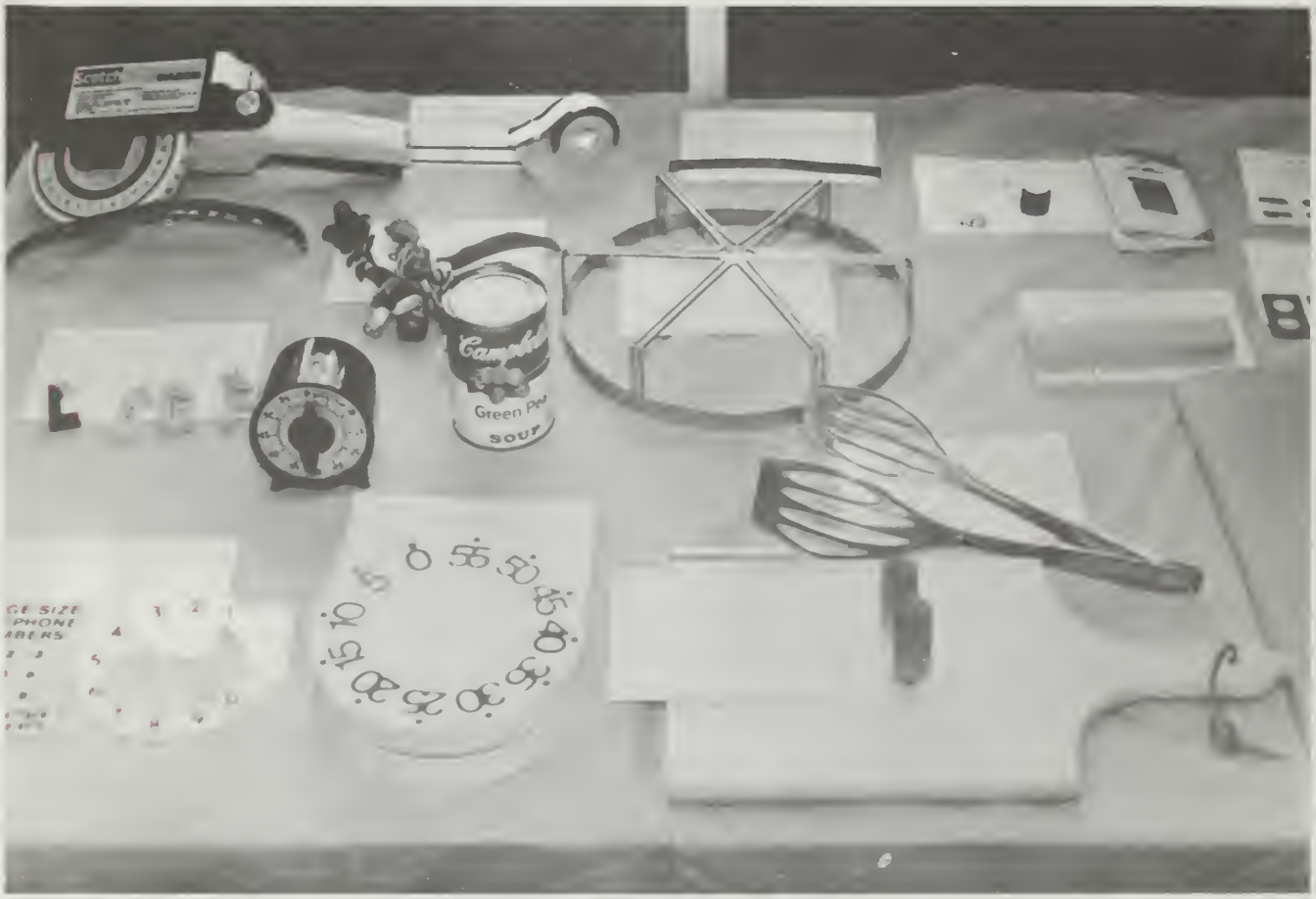

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Job-related equipment is provided to eligible clients. Specialized devices range from closed circuit television monitors to talking calculators, tape recorders and other adaptive equipment. Staff engineers conduct on-site employment evaluations and interface braille, large print and talking terminals to company computers and word-processors.

VENDING/INDUSTRIES PROGRAM

- The Vending Facilities Program is a vocational rehabilitation service in which clients interested in self-employment can receive training in the operation of small retail vending facilites and go on to support themselves and their families. Counselors and established vendors provide management skills and on-site experience for trainees. The program secures new vending facilities and provides trained and licensed vendors with the necessary equipment and initial merchandise to start their own business. They then become independent businessmen and women. The vending facilities statewide are located in federal, state, county, and municipal properties, as well as private industry and retail outlets.

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Established in 1980, the Independent Living Program's major focus is the coordination of existing federal, state, and local resources, enabling this population to function more independently. The program is fortunate to have an advisory board of consumers and rehabilitation professionals, who provide helpful recommendations on the direction and operation of the Independent Living Program. Counselors coordinate a wide range of services, which assist clients to maximize independence and freedom.

The services include:

Case management and advocacy services

Training in independent living skills

Personal and family counseling

Assistance in self-help and problem solving

Peer counseling and commmunication skills

Transportation and housing coordination

MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS

- The Commission provides services to blind and visually handicapped children from infancy to age fourteen. Counselors visit the home, work directly with the child, and show parents how to help their child grow independently. They provide counseling and support to children and their families and teach techniques of daily living, recreational activities, and other skills.

  As the relationship grows and needs change, the childrens' workers are there to coordinate educational services and continue counseling during these formative years. They work closely with rehabilitation teachers, vocational rehabilitation counselors and social workers, to ensure continued service delivery beyond age 14.

- The Multi-Handicap Program serves clients who are mentally retarded blind, deaf blind, and mentally retarded deaf blind. Counselors provide direct services to help this population to be as independent as possible, through suitable employment or as homemakers. Additional services are provided by social workers, rehabilitation teachers, mobility instructors and the equipment engineer.

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- Since 1978, Consumer Advisory Councils have made a substantial contribution to the work of the Commission. Each of the six regions in the state has an Advisory Council consisting of 11 members. The 16 member Central Advisory Council has two members representing each region, along with representatives from consumer organizations, private agencies serving the blind, and other interested persons.

  The chief responsibilities of the Regional and Central Advisory Councils are to advise the Commission on its policies and advocate on behalf of blind people.

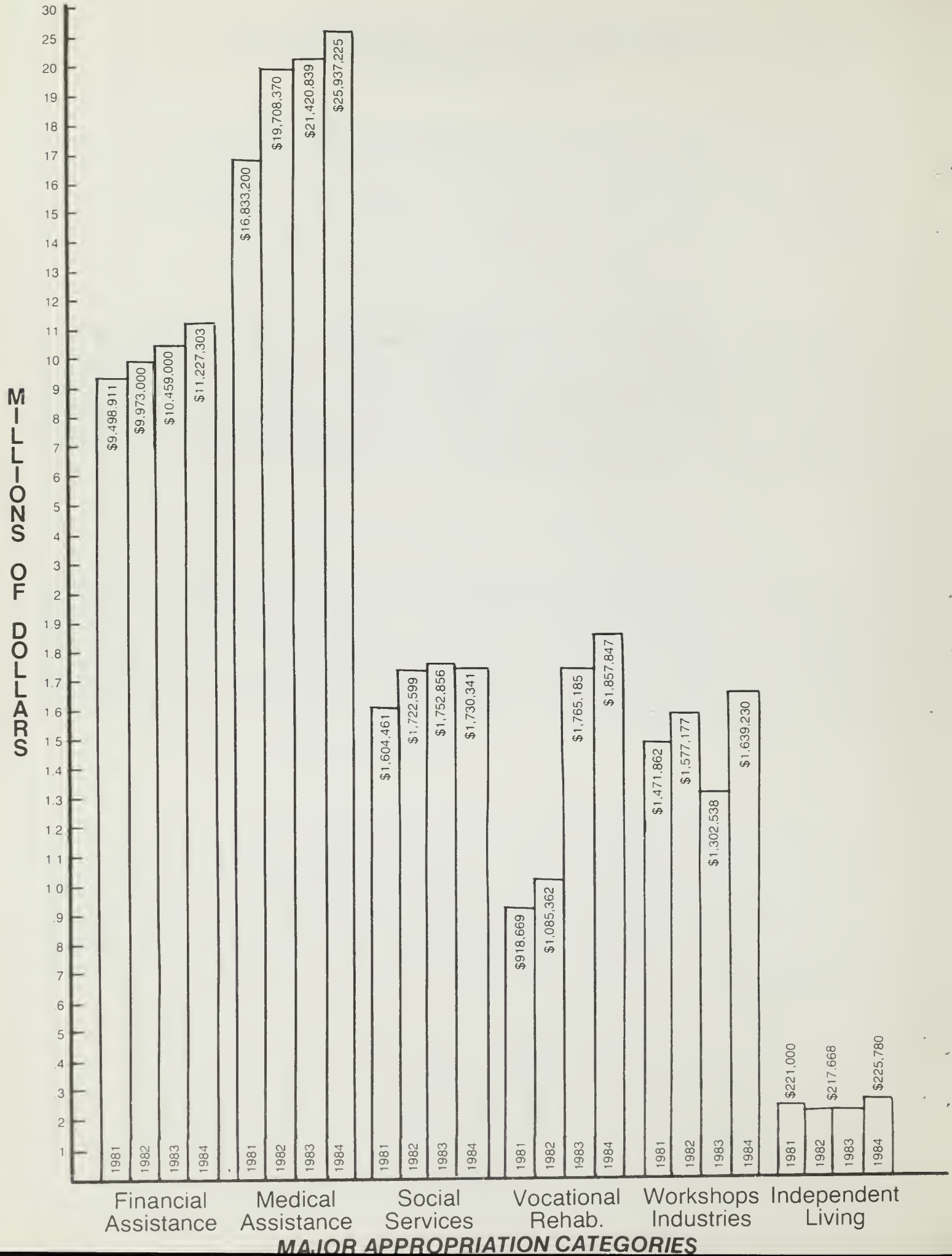
OFFICE OF INFORMATION SERVICES
M.C.B. LIBRARY

- The Office of Information Services (OIS) provides timely information to blind people, state and private agencies, the medical community, employers, and the general public. OIS is responsible for Talking Book and Radio Reading Services, public relations and marketing efforts, agency publications, and information and referral services.

  The OIS also provides information on services and activities though "Focal Point," a quarterly, large print and cassette newsletter distributed to individuals and organizations statewide. The telephone information tape enables quick and easy access to current information. Callers hear a three-minute tape updated weekly. They can also leave messages and request additional information. The tape operates on 727-5550, Mass. Toll-Free: 1-800-392-6450, evenings and weekends.

- The Commission's radio show is broadcast on the Radio Reading Service Network through the Talking Information Center and Pioneer Valley Radio Reading Service Originating from the Boston Office, this bi-weekly program informs listeners about services available; and with two-way talk capabilities, they can join in on the conversation. These radio reading services are broadcast to blind and print-handicapped listeners in the Commonwealth.

- The Commission's Library is open to staff, professionals and the general public who are interested in the field of blindness. The library offers a number of current journals and periodicals, ranging from aids and devices to psychology. The book collection runs the gamut from administration to vocational rehabilitation. Films are available on how to help a blind person, employment opportunities, and the medical causes of blindness. Call the library for more information at 727-5550 or Mass. Toll-Free: 1-800-392-6450.


MILLIONS OF DOLLARS
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$1,752,856
$1,730,341
$918,669
$1,085,362
$1,765,185
$1,857,847
$1,471,862
$1,577,177
$1,302,538
$1,639,230
$221,000
$217,668
$225,780
1981
1982
1983
1984
Financial Assistance
Medical Assistance
Social Services
Vocational Rehab.
Workshops Industries
Independent Living
MAJOR APPROPRIATION CATEGORIES

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In fiscal year 1984 the Commission's total appropriation was $42,621,524.00. Nearly 80 percent was allocated to Medical and Financial assistance. The balance went to direct and supportive services.

MAJOR APPROPRIATION CATEGORIES

	1981	1982	1983	1984
Financial Assistance	$9,498,911	$9,973,000	$10,459,000	$11,227,303
Medical Assistance	16,833,200	19,708,370	21,420,839	25,937,225
Social Services	1,604,461	1,722,599	1,752,856	1,730,341
Vocational Rehabilitation	918,669	1,085,362	1,765,185	1,857,847
Workshops & Industries	1,471,862	1,577,177	1,302,538	1,639,230
Independent Living	221,000	217,668	217,668	225,780

THE CENTRAL REGISTER

- The Commission keeps an up-to-date account of the legally blind population throughout the Commonwealth. This department registers and certifies newly-blind people, furnishes travel passes, and conducts a census of the registered population.

- The Central Register and Research Departments compile an Annual Report of the Register, which provides detailed information concerning the number of legally blind persons in each community in the state. The Report also provides statistics on their ages, sex, medical causes of blindness, and sources of referral.

The following chart provides an indication of the growth of the registered population of blind persons over the past ten years.

GROWTH OF REGISTER

Years	Registered Blind	Years	Registered Blind
1974	12,611	1979	20,375
1975	13,733	1980	20,698
1976	15,175	1981	21,787
1977	16,846	1982	22,442
1978	18,411	1983	22,543
		1984	23,533

SERVICE STATISTICS

Individuals Rehabilitated 1,226

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Medical Assistance 5,486

Rehabilitation Teaching 2,142

Orientation and Mobility 810

Vocational Rehabilitation 1,032

Social Rehabilitation 2,553

Independent Living 114

Children 403

LOOKING AHEAD

"MCB is looking forward to completing the following objectives:"

1. To expand and improve Talking Book Services

2. To expand and improve coverage of Radio Reading Services

3. To reorganize the administration and services of the agency

4. To expand Independent Living Social Services, with emphasis on the deaf-blind

5. To improve the Industries Program

6. To improve small business opportunities for blind persons

7. To expand Social Services

8. To develop innovative regional based programming

AGENCY PUBLICATIONS

- Brochure of Service
- Blindness and Visual Impairment
- Children's Services
- Compilation of Massachusetts Laws Pertaining to Blindness
- Focal Point
- Medical Assistance
- Multi-Handicapped Services
- Question Most often Asked About Eyesight By People Over 60
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Call the Office of Information Services at
727-5550 or Mass. toll free: 1-800-392-6450,
to request publications (in braille, large print, or cassette),
speakers for your group or organization, and/or information on blindness.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

CENTRAL OFFICE

110 Tremont Street, 6th floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
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Toll-Free: 1-800-392-6450

REGIONAL OFFICES

Region I (Western Mass)
1200 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 781-1290
Toll-Free: 1-800-332-2772

Region II (Central Mass)
90 Madison Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(617) 754-1148
Toll-Free: 1-800-392-6450, Ext. 0522

Region III (North of Boston)
110 Tremont Street, 6th floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-5550
Toll-Free: 1-800-392-6450

Region IV (Metropolitan Boston)
110 Tremont Street, 6th floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-5550
Toll-Free: 1-800-392-6450

Region V (Southeastern Mass)
85 North Main Street
Fall River, MA 02720
(617) 676-1056
Toll-Free: 1-800-392-6450, Ext. 0577

Region VI (Boston, Brookline)
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Boston, MA 02108
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Toll-Free: 1-800-392-6450

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

ANNUAL REPORT 1985

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

Fiscal 1985 was a year in which the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind reached out to the community in which we live and shared our mission and purpose with an openness to the new while honoring the old.

The agency restructured itself with the creation of Office Information Services. Not only was this a more efficient way to inform the general public, but also it provided a focus for other information functions such as Talking Books and Radio Reading Services. The office has been most successful in providing direction and substance to the agency's information as exemplified by its success with the Open Houses.

The agency's openness brought increased program success and the recognition that much work remained to be done if the agency was to serve new and rising client needs in the community. During FY 85 we increased rehabilitation by eleven percent, began Industries for the Blind modernization, and expanded services to children, multihandicapped, and the elderly blind.

The agency performed well in Fiscal 1985, yet the enormity of its mission is indeed humbled because of its impact upon the lives of those who use our service. The people of MCB are both its greatest resource and its magic. This report reflects their dedication and investment in the enterprise of public service.

Charles H. Crawford
Commissioner

Michael S. Dukakis,
Governor
Philip W. Johnston
Secretary, Executive Office of Human Services

800-6-86-810591

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

— Yesterday and Today —

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind was originally founded in 1906. Miss Helen Keller was a dominant influence in establishing the organization. Miss Keller felt strongly that the blind and deaf/blind should have a government agency in Massachusetts, primarily devoted to seeking beneficial legislation and affording them the opportunity to gain self-determination.

In 1919 the Commission was renamed the Division of the Blind and established as a part of the Department of Education. For the first several years the Director of the Department of Education was also the Director of the Division of the Blind.

In 1966, the Division of the Blind was abolished and the Commission for the Blind was once again established as an autonomous body. It currently belongs to the family of Human Service agencies under the direction of the Executive Office of Human Services.

Executive Secretary of Human Services, Philip W. Johnston (left)
Commissioner, Commission for The Blind, Charles H. Crawford (right)

OFFICE OF INFORMATION FORMED

In August of 1984, the Office of Information Services was established as a new unit of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

The responsibilities of this unit are to direct, expand and plan the new Talking Book Library Program, and all communications functions. The unit also directs and monitors the Radio Reading Service contracts which provides radio reading services to the blind and print handicapped of the Commonwealth.

O.I.S. produces publications for use within as well as out of the agency. MCB's quarterly newsletter ''Focal Point'' is available to any interested subscriber. There is an informational tape which people can call for blindness related matters. The tape operates every evening from 5:00 p.m. to 8:45 a.m. and all day Saturdays and Sundays on both the local and toll free phone numbers.

STATE WIDE OPEN HOUSES HELD

The end of October saw the culmination of much hard work which resulted with Open Houses being held in all the regional offices and the Boston central office.

Our goal was to welcome and educate the public as to our services and the capabilities of the blind people.

With more than 700 people visiting and taking part in the many displays, we know our goal was achieved. Many thanks to all MCB staff whose continued professional dedication contributed to this successful event.

FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND POSTAL SUBSIDY IN JEOPARDY

For the fourth year in succession the Federal Administration failed to include the "revenue foregone postal subsidy" in the budget.

If this subsidy were not restored it would affect 695,000 blind and physically impaired people throughout the country. The proposal change would necessitate the Regional Library in Massachusetts to spend about sixty-six percent of its budget for mailing of books, records, and cassettes to its subscribers, and it would cost the subscriber an average of $1.07 to return these materials to the library.

A press conference was held with Secretary Philip Johnston, Executive Office of Human Services, and Commissioner Charles H. Crawford of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind to alert the general public to the situation and to enlist their help in restoring the subsidy. There was a tremendous response by the news media to the press conference.

Along with MCB efforts and individual letter writing campaigns, the subsidy was restored by Congress.

STAYING AFTER SCHOOL IS FUN!

In response to Advisory Board input, the Region VI staff (Boston area) began planning an after-school program for 12 blind children.

The program was held at the Murphy school in Dorchester and met two afternoons a week. Activities ranged from swimming, gymnastics, arts and crafts, and field trips.

By school year's end consensus from parents and teachers was that the children had benefited socially, and interacted with their peers more freely and confidently.

Final proof of the program's success comes from the kids who over the last year had close to 100% attendance.

Plans for 1986 include expanding ''After School'' to more kids and adding a third day of activities.

THE ROBERT SCOTT AWARD

November 1984 Mr. Robert J. Scott retired after 32 years with MCB. Mr. Scott began his career as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and over the years used his wealth of knowledge to enrich many areas of MCB services. He retired as the Assistant Director of Rehabilitation Services.

As a result of his arduous and zealous performance in his various positions, the Robert J. Scott Awards were established to celebrate outstanding achievements in the field of vocational rehabilitation. The first recipients are to be honored in November 1985.

SERVICES

The Commission serves any legally blind person within the Commonwealth regardless of age, race, sex, ethnic background. The blind population of Massachusetts at the close of the fiscal year (June 30, 1985) was 23,891. Of the new registrants, 61.5% were over 65 years of age, and 50% of this group was 75 or older.

Referrals to the Commission come from such sources as ophthalmologists, optometrists, hospitals, low vision clinics, private and public agencies, relatives and interested citizens. The Commission offers the following services:

- ☐ Services to blind children and their parents
- ☐ Vocational Rehabilitation
- ☐ Self-employment opportunities in state owned vending facilities
- ☐ Orientation & Mobility instruction (cane travel)
- ☐ Social Services
- ☐ Volunteer Assistance
- ☐ Rehabilitation Teaching
- ☐ Medical Assistance
- ☐ Financial Assistance (SSI)
- ☐ Talking Book Program
- ☐ Radio Reading Services
- ☐ Advocacy Services
- ☐ Independent Living Program

FISCAL YEAR 1985 DATA

BUDGET	
Administration	$ 764,028
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	7,717,583
Medical Assistance	29,951,180
Social Services	2,707,146
Vocational Rehabilitation	1,419,360
Industries	1,110,887
TOTAL BUDGET	$46,970,184

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	
Total number served	6,268
SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME	
Total number served	5,200
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION	
Number placed in employment	210
Number served Fy 85	977
SOCIAL SERVICES	
Number closed cases	1,139
Number served	2,800
Information and Referral	1,593
Cases completed	2,732
INDEPENDENT LIVING	
Cases closed	39
Cases active	251
ORIENTATION & MOBILITY SERVICES	
Cases served	956

REGIONAL OFFICES

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	1200 Main Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413) 781-1290 1-800-332-2772 Toll Free
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Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Annual Report

1986 - 1987

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Human Services

Michael S. Dukakis, Governor
Philip W. Johnston, Secretary

Charles H. Crawford, Commissioner

ADVISORY BOARD

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind was established in 1906. The Commission provides a wide range of social and vocational rehabilitation services to legally blind Massachusetts residents of all ages. Referrals to the agency are made by ophthalmologists and optometrists, hospitals and low vision clinics, public and private institutions, and by interested individuals.

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

Fiscal years 1986 and 1987 were years of continued growth and development in the programs and services offered at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. One of the important elements which made this possible was the collaboration between different units and programs in the agency.

Industries for the Blind was updated with a new name as modernization efforts continued with the new employee's wage scale changes and a new contract for the Governor's Awards pen sets. The agency developed a viable plan for serving a portion of the elderly population in crisis and at risk for nursing home placement, which was evidenced by the award of a grant to the agency. Services for clients at the other end of the age range were expanded with recreational opportunities for elementary and high school age students. With the celebration of its 8th and 9th anniversaries, Radio Reading Services continued to provide excellent programming for clients of all ages.

Without the shared care and concern of all MCB employees, the successes of these past years would not have occurred and the mandate of the agency could not have been met. The people at MCB knew how to balance immediate needs and plan for future growth as the changes and increase in the client population occurred. The following report details the continued dedication and concern that MCB has for its clients.

Charles H. Crawford
Commissioner

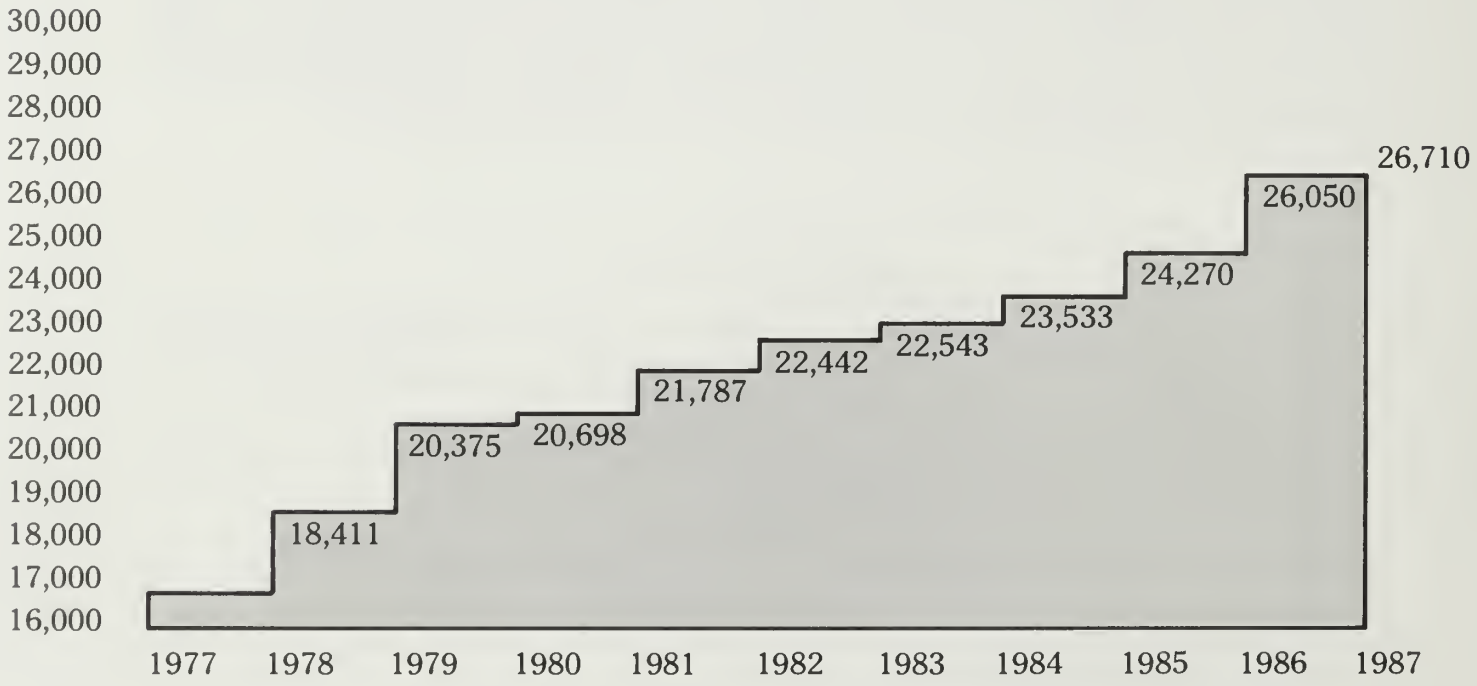
REPORT OF THE REGISTER

The 1987 Register of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind represented a total of 26,710 legally blind persons. This total reflected an overall increase of 2.5 percent. The same trend was evident in 1986 with the total for the registry increasing 7.3 percent to 26,050. The regional distribution of the register remained essentially the same as in previous years. Region IV, the 495 belt, included the largest number of blind persons or 23.2 percent and Region II, the Worcester area, the smallest or 11.4 percent of the total blind population. The rate of increase was lowest, 0.5 percent, in Region III and highest, 4.3 percent, in Region V.

The aging factor continued to be a significant characteristic among both the total and new registrants with persons ages 65 and over representing 64.7 percent of the total register in FY '86 and 65.1 percent in FY '87. 74.4 percent of new registrants were age 65 or over in FY '86. In comparison with the total blind population, the aging trend continues to be even greater among new registrants as evidenced by the fact that 59.1 percent of those registered in 1987 were age 75 and over at the time of registration and 44.3 percent were age 80 and over at registration.

GROWTH OF REGISTER

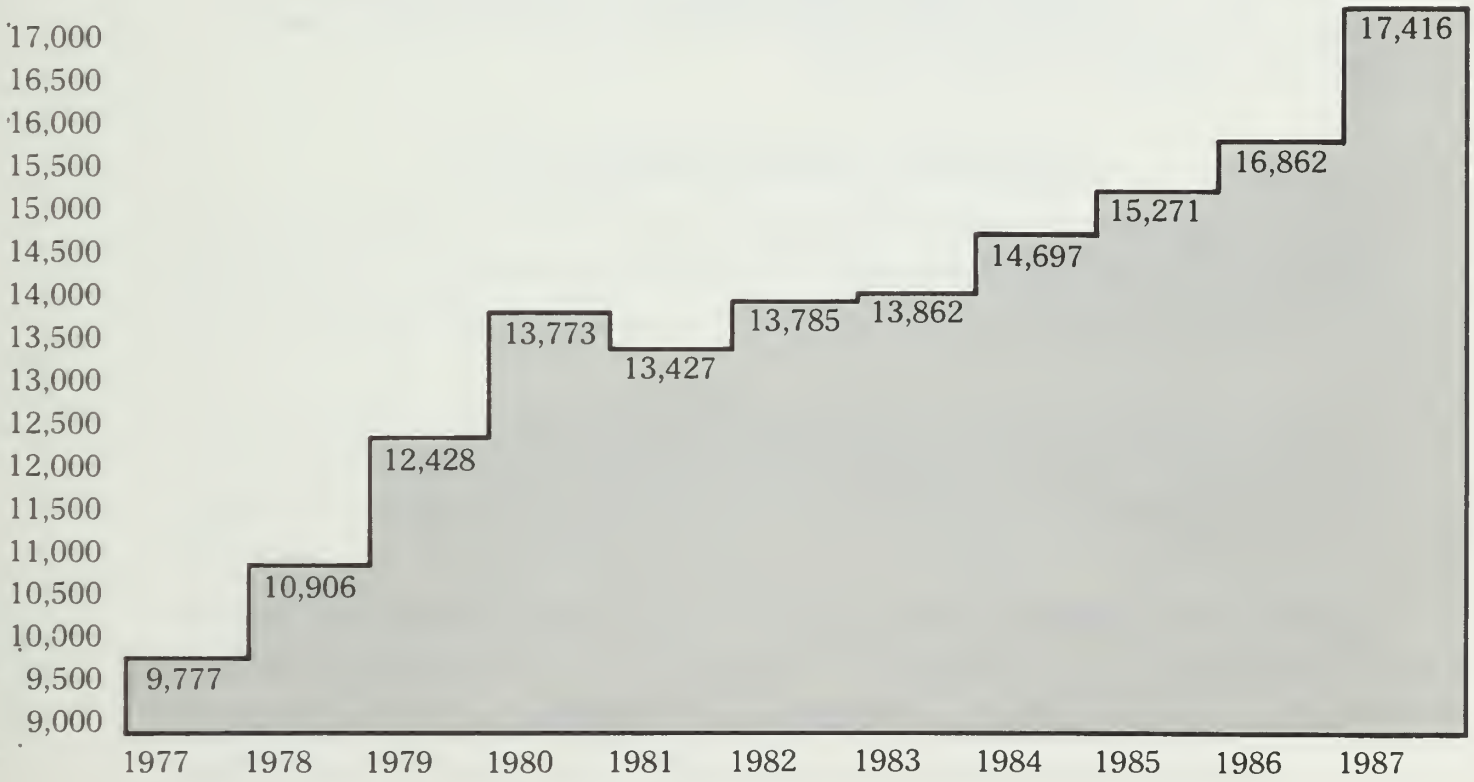
POPULATION OF REGISTERED MASS. RESIDENTS



BUDGET

	1986	1987
Administration	$ 878,896	$ 887,478
Medical Assistance	28,798,097	37,697,548
Social Services	2,348,441	3,341,206
Vocational Rehabilitation	1,651,728	3,087,531
Industries	1,292,589	1,300,000

POPULATION OF CLIENTS OVER 65



HIGHLIGHTS

GRANT FOR THE ELDERLY

On January 9, 1986, a press conference was held in the Worcester Public Library which featured Congressman Joseph Early from the Third Congressional District. Congressman Early was instrumental in the awarding of a grant for $199,475.00 under section C, Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act to the Commission for the Blind. This grant enabled the Commission to expand outreach to the elderly blind; the primary purpose being to decrease inappropriate nursing home placement. The new program is called BRIDGE - Blind Reintegration for Independence, Development and Growth for Elders. Currently staff consists of a director and three liaison workers. Each liaison worker covers a third of the state and provides intensive rehabilitation teaching, support and referral, and intensive, basic mobility skills.

SPECIAL FOCUS ON MINORITY AFFAIRS

Commissioner Crawford recognized the importance of reaching out to all minority groups by providing comprehensive services to every legally blind citizen of the Commonwealth. With that goal in mind he appointed a Special Assistant Commissioner for Minority Affairs. Working closely with community leaders, health clinics and church groups to inform them of the various services that the Commission offers are some of the duties Tania Garcia, the new appointee, will perform. She will also work with minority MCB clients who can help encourage others to receive much needed services.

RADIO READING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

State officials and local dignitaries celebrated the eighth anniversary of the provision of Radio Reading Services to the blind, visually impaired and print handicapped individuals in a special State House ceremony. Governor Dukakis expressed his support of the statewide network of the private, non-profit services. Radio Reading is transmitted through seven radio stations and sixty cable television systems. A minimum of 17 hours of various reading material, i.e. local newspapers, magazines, and best selling books is taped daily.

MCB CO-SPONSORS BANKING CONFERENCES

An important link between the banking community and blind and visually impaired consumers was established during 1986. Two conferences, one held in Boston and the other in Springfield, were co-sponsored by the Division of Banks and the Commission for the Blind.

Panel members, which included staff from the Client Assistance Program, aired concerns about accessibility of automatic teller machines, acceptance by bank tellers of raised line checks and the currently limited availability of cassette bank statements.

Members of the banking community who attended were impressed by the significant turnout of consumers.

As a direct result of the conferences, several banks have begun exploring possible expansion of their services to directly benefit the blind and visually impaired.

DEDICATION TO JOHN E. FERGUSON

On January 3, 1986 Commissioner Crawford dedicated the newly named Industries Program to the memory of the late John E. Ferguson.

Mr. Ferguson worked at the then Division of the Blind from February 4, 1952 until his retirement on November 30, 1977. He labored tirelessly and arduously for any piece of legislation he believed would benefit the blind people of the Commonwealth.

Commissioner Crawford delivered the welcoming remarks, and Secretary of the Executive Office of Human Services, Philip W. Johnston, gave the keynote address. James Ferguson, brother of the late John Ferguson and Aide to former Speaker O'Neill, expressed his rememberances most eloquently. Mr. Gordon Shaw, a 50 year employee, also spoke at the ceremony. A luncheon and tour of the Cambridge facility followed.

MCB EMPLOYEES HONORED

Adelaide Mickey, who served the Commission for the past 30 years, was one of 10 state employees awarded the Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service. Adelaide Mickey, who retired this past year, worked as a Chief Supervisor of the Blind and before that as a Rehabilitation Teacher. She served as a model for two generations of blind clients.

In addition to Adelaide Mickey, other MCB employees have been recognized by the Commonwealth. Eileen Ginnetty, Assist. Commissioner for Independent Living/Social Services, Willie Davis, Contracts, Peter Parke, Placement Specialist, Gail Whittemore, Independent Living Counselor, and Arthur Singer, Client Assistance Program Counselor, received Commonwealth Citations for Outstanding Performance.

NEW STATE FUNDING ESTABLISHES DEAF-BLIND UNIT

The Commission for the Blind was awarded 1.7 million by the state to establish a Deaf-Blind/Multihandicapped Services Unit. The program provides coordinated services to the ever-increasing deaf-blind and deaf-blind retarded population. Commissioner Crawford notes that many people are responsible for arranging the funding for this new unit, including the leadership of Governor Dukakis, Secretary Philip W. Johnston, and the Legislature. This funding enables the agency to greatly expand existing services and meet additional needs of those now turning age 22 who are leaving the educational system.

The new unit has 9 staff members to coordinate, plan, supervise, and provide direct services. They will also contract with other public and private agencies to establish community residences. There is also a position through the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-blind Children and Adults that has been awarded to the Commission. This person works closely with the other MCB staff to coordinate services.

TALKING BOOK LIBRARY AUTOMATED

The Regional Talking Book Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has computerized its operations. The Regional Library receives state funding through the Commission with additional support from Perkins School for the Blind. The Library's computerization was jointly funded by MCB and the Board of Library Commissioners.

The regional library has 25,000 separate book titles represented by 20,000 volumes of braille and recorded materials which are produced for distribution by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Library of Congress). The Commission for the Blind is responsible for the program in this state and for distribution of the special talking book machines and cassette players. The machines and books are mailed free of charge and are on loan to blind, visually impaired and print handicapped residents of the Commonwealth.

PHOTO

Dedication ceremonies at Ferguson Industries.

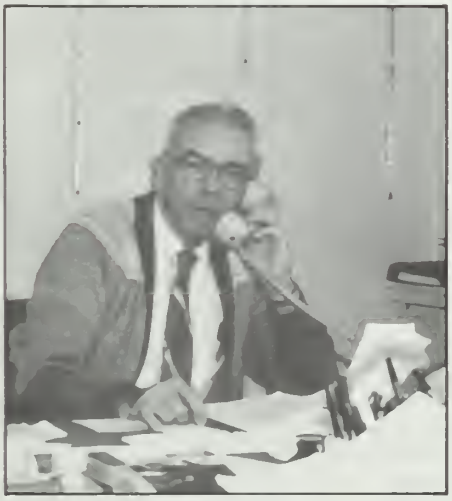
Carballo Award recipient, Adelaide Mickey is congratulated by Governor Dukakis.

Youngsters enjoy the MCB afterschool program.

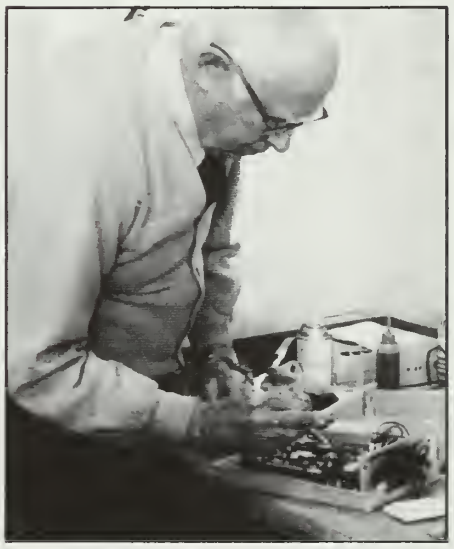
GALLERY

Donna Fannelle using adapted switchboard at MCB Message Center.

Radio Reading Services Anniversary ceremonies.



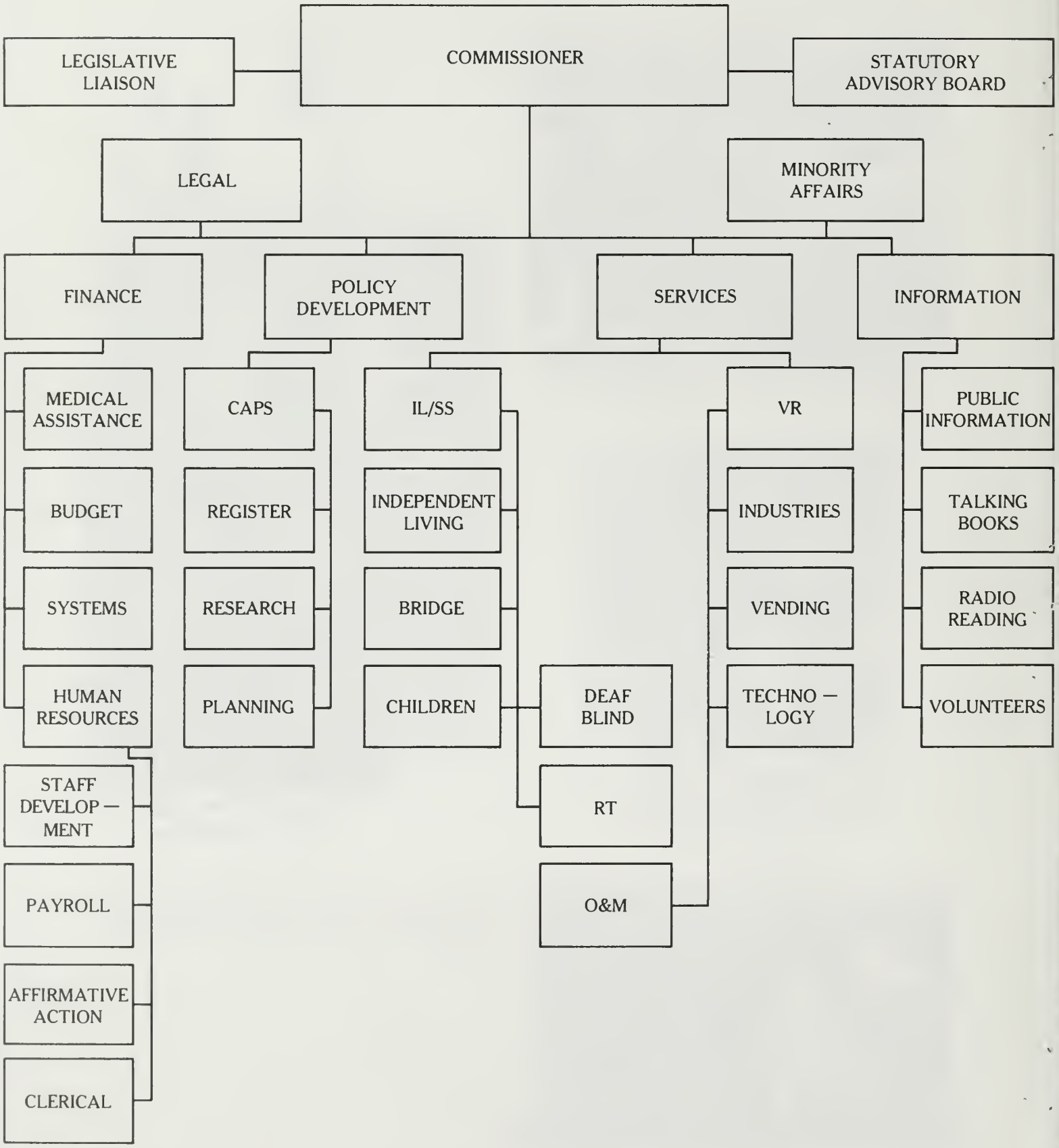
Retired Deputy Commissioner, Fred Greehan.



Telephone Pioneer repairs Talking Book Machine.

Commissioner Crawford presents Elaine Saunders the Bob Scott award for Vocational Rehabilitation excellence.

M.C.B. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



SERVICES

ADVOCACY

The Client Assistance and Program Support Unit (CAPS) assists consumers with individual problems they may encounter while seeking appropriate services from MCB or other agencies. CAPS also identifies service gaps and makes recommendations for systemic improvements.

INDEPENDENT LIVING/SOCIAL SERVICES

Services were provided by Social Rehabilitation Counselors for 2,963 clients in FY '86. In FY '87 that number increased to 3,419 clients receiving services. 75% of all new referrals have been for clients 65 and older. Individual and family counseling, information and referral, case management, and teaching home and personal management skills are some of the services clients may receive from IL/SS. Other IL/SS services follow.

Services to Children and Their Families

Children's services are available to all legally blind children up to age 14 and their families. Counselors offer support and counseling for problems and concerns related to visual impairment or any additional disabilities, interpretation of infant development, advocacy, recreation services, activities for daily living skills, and prevocational counseling. 614 children were served in FY '87 and 551 in FY '86.

Deaf-blind/Multihandicapped Unit

This newly centralized unit provides social and vocational rehabilitation services, coordinates services, and case manages for clients turning 22. Community residences are established for clients who are ready to live independently.

Independent Living Center

Case management, advocacy, independent living skills training, peer counseling, as well as adaptive aids and equipment and the provision of certain funds for home modifications are part of the wide range of services offered statewide. From July 1985 through June 1986, a total of 175 active clients were served, 64 new referrals were made, and 59 cases were successfully closed through the Center's services. 129 referrals were received from July 1986 through June 1987 and 63 clients were successfully closed.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The Medical Assistance Program serves an estimated 7,000 legally blind clients who are entitled to receive Medicaid through Social Security. A simplified billing system has been implemented, resulting in faster claims processing and quicker payments. With the refinement of the administrative system within the Commission, quality assurance and efficiency has allowed easier, better services for the 507 new eligible applicants. 700 Social Security Income Recipients, totalling 700,000 claims and $37 million in reimbursement to Medicaid participating providers, reflect the increased need for and importance of Medical Assistance.

ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

Orientation and Mobility Specialists teach independent travel skills to individuals who are blind. Individual assessments are made to determine goals, interests, needs, and capabilities. Services include orientation to home, neighborhood, and place of employment. 966 clients were served in FY '86, with an increase in FY '87 to 1051 served.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Policy Development Unit's foremost concern is to ensure that services provided to clients are of the best quality possible. The Unit develops client services policies for the provision of vocational rehabilitation and independent living social services and strives to ensure that policies which effect clients are equitable and truly meet their needs. The Unit monitors and evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of these policies through individual case reviews, statistical analyses, and client needs studies. The Unit also coordinates agency planning to improve services and to meet the changing needs of blind persons in the future.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Vocational rehabilitation services offer a variety of services designed to assist all eligible and interested blind persons to secure competitive employment, independent homemaker status, or non-competitive employment. Services include evaluation and assessment, individual and family counseling, physical restoration, training, and placement. During FY '86 1,029 consumers were served, with 137 case closures into competitive employment and 81 into homemakers. In FY '87 1,060 consumers were served, with 137 consumers securing employment and 96 case closures as homemakers. Additional services in vocational rehabilitation follow.

The Vending Facilities Program trains and places blind vendors in stands at federal, state, municipal and other business locations. There are more than 50 successful vending facilities operating in the Commonwealth.

The Small Business Grant Program allows qualified individuals to develop and plan their own small businesses with support from the Commission in the form of funding, equipment, or both.

Technology for the Blind Program makes previously inaccessible jobs accessible to blind consumers. The Program provides evaluation, training and equipment placement for vocational purposes. Equipment is provided to eligible clients if it is necessary to obtain or maintain employment.

Ferguson Industries for the Blind has four production facilities throughout the Commonwealth. The Cambridge facility handles the bulk of the production, making brooms, mops, pillowcases and bibs. Ferguson Industries also has a Homebound Program in which articles are made in the home and marketed through the Industries.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Affirmative action is a positive and aggressive approach to recruit, employ, train, and promote women, minorities, the handicapped, and Vietnam-Era Veterans in an effort to remedy past and present discrimination. Affirmative Action is an integral component of MCB's Human Resources Department and has the full and complete support and commitment of the Commissioner. This commitment is especially important in a human services agency as we serve communities and clients from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The past fiscal year personnel records reflect this agency's commitment through a steady progress in the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of Affirmative Action candidates.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) does not discriminate in terms or conditions of employment or in provision of services on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap or veteran status.

Any person having inquiries or complaints concerning nondiscrimination in employment is directed to contact M. Eugene Rivers, MCB, 110 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-5550, Extension 256 or toll-free 1-800-392-6450/voice; 1-800-392-6556/TDD.

Any person having inquiries or complaints concerning nondiscrimination in provision of services is directed to contact Robert A. Dowling, MCB, 110 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-5550, Extension 200 or toll-free 1-800-392-6450/voice; 1-800-392-6556/TDD.

Any person may also contact the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Region One, Boston, Massachusetts 02109, regarding MCB's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, 34 C.F.R. Part 100; Title IX, 34 C.F.R. Part 106; Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 45 C.F.R. 90; or Section 504, 34 C.F.R. Part 104.

REGIONAL OFFICES

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